

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introducing Active Learning	03
How Adults Learn	05
How the Brain Works	06
Learning Styles	07
Methods for Making Learning Active	08
Developing an Effecting Learning Environment for Adults	12
Seating Arrangements	13
Ten Time Savers for Active Learning	16
The Role of Facilitator	18
The Foundation for Building Effective Relationships	20

# INTRODUCTION

As the CRI program expands in Pakistan, a core team of educators will continue to train kindergarten and primary school teachers without the assistance of international trainers. The Facilitators' Guide for CRI Trainers has been developed as a resource for those trainers as they prepare teachers to use the *Creating Democratic Schools* methods

Written in simple language, the training guide is designed to extend the knowledge and skills of educators, who may have limited experience conducting interactive, experiential-based presentations and training. It describes optimum circumstances where adults learn best and introduces the notion of active learning, offering specific examples to use in facilitating group discussions. It also provides practical strategies on arranging the physical and social environment for learning and teaches the use of effective communication techniques with participants.

This guide has been adapted for use in Pakistan under grant from USAID to implement the *Creating Democratic Schools* program. CRI is indebted to USAID for understanding of the importance of investing in young children and their families. The guide was developed by Children's Resources International, Inc. and adapted for trainers in Pakistan. Ellen Daniels developed the guide and Dinah Heller reviewed it; both the author and reviewer have been effective facilitators with adult learners for many years. Julie Empson adapted the guide for the current program.

# INTRODUCING ACTIVE LEARNING

Over 2400 years ago, Confucius declared:

*What I hear, I forget.*

*What I see, I remember.*

*What I do, I understand.*

Adult educators have come to believe that people gain the most from learning experiences when they are actively involved in the learning process. New information can be readily absorbed when participants are engaged and able to respond from the perspective of their individual backgrounds, experiences, and resources (See Figure 1).

This section describes active learning and its potential benefits and provides a framework for more easily and more rapidly introducing active learning into the learning sessions. The section concludes with specific, concrete examples of ways to use active learning.

Active learning involves learners performing an activity and taking the lead on what they are doing. They take a participatory role in learning rather, than a passive one.) Boswell (1995) considered how adults learn in classroom environments and documented the following characteristics:

- There is less emphasis on the transfer of information and greater emphasis on “higher order” thinking skills —critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation.
- Adult learners do something other than simply listening passively.
- Adult learners engage in activities.
- Adult learners explore attitudes and values held about the course materials.
- Both adult learners and facilitators receive more and faster feedback.

In studies comparing learning environments using active learning versus passive learning, active learning methods generally result in greater retention of material, superior problem solving skills, more positive attitudes, and higher motivation for

future learning (McKeachie et. al., 1987). Researchers generally conclude that active learning produces educationally superior results.

Active learning increases the learner's interest and attention. Such effects are particularly important given the tendency for learners' attention to wax and wane. Finally, active learning provides greater and richer enjoyment for learners and presenters.

# HOW ADULTS LEARN

Figure 1

Assumptions about Adult Learners	Implications
Adults view themselves as capable of self-direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adults want a climate of openness and respect.</li><li>• Adults enjoy planning and carrying out own learning exercises.</li><li>• Adults need to be involved in the evaluation of their own progress.</li></ul>
Adults bring a lifetime of experience to the learning situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adults gain knowledge from their experience.</li><li>• Adults recognize that their mistakes are opportunities for learning.</li><li>• Adults listen to peers.</li></ul>
Adults are ready to learn when tasks take place in a social and occupation-oriented context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adults need opportunities to practice skills.</li><li>• Adults are ready to learn when they recognize they need to learn.</li><li>• Adults can best identify their own readiness-to-learn and teachable moments.</li></ul>
Adults want learning to solve specific problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adult education needs to be problem-centered rather than theoretical.</li><li>• Adults need to apply and try out learning quickly.</li></ul>

# HOW THE BRAIN WORKS

The brain does not function the way an audio- or videotape recorder does. The brain doesn't just receive information—it processes it. Incoming information is continually being questioned. The brain asks questions like these: *Have I heard or seen this information before? Where does this information fit? What can I do with it? Can I assume that this is the same idea I had yesterday or last month or last year?*

To process information effectively, adults must reflect upon it externally as well as internally. When information is discussed with others and questioned, the brain can do a better job of learning. The brain needs to test the information, recap it, or explain it in order to store it in its memory banks.

Real learning is not memorization anyway. Most of what we memorize is forgotten within hours. Material cannot be swallowed whole. To retain what has been presented, learners must reflect on it. A presenter cannot do the mental work for learners, because they must put together what they hear and see into a meaningful whole. Without the opportunity to discuss, ask questions, do, and perhaps even teach someone else, real learning does not occur.

Learning is not a one-time event. Learning comes in waves. It takes several exposures to material to reflect on it long enough to understand it. It also takes different kinds of exposures, not just a repetition of input. Even more important is the way in which the exposure happens. When the learner is engaged, he comes to the encounter with curiosity, with questions, and with a real interest in the outcome. The learner is seeking something. He or she wants the best answer to a question to solve a problem, or find a way to do a job.

# LEARNING STYLES

Educators have come to realize that learners have different learning styles. Some participants are *visual learners* and learn best by seeing someone else do it. Usually, they like carefully sequenced presentations of information. They prefer to write down what a presenter tells them. When learning, they are generally quiet and seldom distracted by noise.

These visual learners contrast with *auditory learners*, who often do not bother to look at what a presenter does, or to take notes. They rely on their ability to hear and remember. During the session, they may be talkative and are easily distracted by noise.

*Kinesthetic learners* learn mainly by direct involvement in activity. They tend to enjoy active movement with their bodies during learning activities. Their approach to learning can sometimes appear haphazard and fidgety, but these learners are processing information through their body movement.

Few learners are exclusively one kind of learner. Grinder (1991) notes that in every group of 30 students, an average of 22 learn effectively as long as a presenter provides a blend of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activity. In order to meet the needs of all learners, sessions must be multi-sensory and filled with variety.

# METHODS FOR MAKING LEARNING ACTIVE

A variety of structured activities can promote discussion, encourage shy people to participate, and manage an unruly group. The greater the variety of presenting information and involving participants, the more interesting and engaged the group will be. Given below are 27 ideas for making learning active and multi-sensory.

1.     **Brainstorming**  
Individuals or groups generate ideas on a given theme or problem. Often uses the principles of: deferring judgment, the wilder the idea the better, and combine and improve ideas.
2.     **Buzz groups**  
Small groups of 3-5 people assemble to discuss, decide, or answer questions, topics, or problems presented verbally and in writing.
3.     **Case method**  
Real-life situations are presented from which a group analyzes, makes decisions, solves problems, and empathizes with the experiences of others. Also known as case studies or situation studies.
4.     **Debates**  
Individuals or groups choose, or are assigned, positions on a controversial topic. Given time to prepare, they present arguments, and debate positions. Variations: at a certain point of debating, each side is asked to reverse positions and resume the debate.
5.     **Demonstrations**  
Learners are shown and told how something works, or how to do something. Demonstration is usually followed by giving the learners the opportunity to try or practice the skill with coaching and feedback.
6.     **Field trips**  
Learners leave the structured environment and venture out into the world to observe, try new things, search for information, interview people, etc.
7.     **Games**  
Learners play games that are constructed to address the learning objectives. Games can be used as icebreakers, to change the pace, to illustrate material, for an amusing way to review information, to liven up a session, to add a spark of friendly competition.



8. **Go-Arounds**  
In go-arounds, the leader asks each person in turn to respond to a single question or idea. Go-arounds give multiple perspectives and add value to the discussion.
9. **Guest presenters**  
Subject matter experts attend the session to present their model, demonstrate techniques, be interviewed by the presenter and the learners, etc.
10. **Homework Assignments**  
Some people rebel at the ideas of assignments or homework, but this kind of exercise can reinforce and personalize learning. Assignments should require active participation too. For example, have parents observe something in particular about their own children or children in another setting.
11. **Individual exercises**  
Learners spend time individually to complete a task, develop plans, develop a position, brainstorm, reflect on the information and their response, etc.
12. **Lecture/lecturette**  
A formal discourse in which a subject matter expert develops and delivers a presentation that conveys information related to the learning objectives. Lectures can be combined with other methods to avoid passive learning.
13. **Lists**  
Have each participant make a list to suit the learning objectives—for example, a list of all the things that they have learned about disciplining their children.
14. **Mentoring**  
Mentoring often refers to a formal, long-term apprenticeship relationship. A limited version of mentoring would have learners who are relatively new to the subject matter paired with more experienced practitioners who can serve as teachers, advisors, and coaches.
15. **Panel presentation**  
People with valuable perspectives on the training topic are invited to attend the session to present their viewpoints, answer questions, and discuss the issues.
16. **Problem-solving**  
A problem is identified and an appropriate, structured problem-solving method(s) is introduced. Individuals or groups are given the opportunity to solve the problem.

**17. Projects**

Learners are given projects to complete that require understanding and application of the principles, skills, knowledge, or attitudes related to the topic. Projects can be presented to the group or completed and displayed as "homework".

**18. Quizzes/tests**

Quizzes or tests can be used in a variety of ways: as pre- or post-course evaluation tools, as a method of review, as competitive games, etc.

**19. Questioning**

Questions that are carefully constructed and artfully presented lead to learner-centered, rather than content-centered, learning. Questioning is used as an activity in its own right, and as an essential component of many of the other methods. The effective use of questions is an essential skill for every facilitator to master.

**20. Read a story**

Reading a story or describing a scene, then allowing the group to react is a way for a group leader to both impart information and get the group to generate information. Occasionally it is productive to have participants read something and then discuss it. Be alert to the possibility that some may not be able to read.

**21. Reports**

Learners or facilitators can present detailed accounts of situations or cases relevant to the training topic for the group to consider, discuss, problem-solve, etc.

**22. Reviews**

Learning sessions often cover an abundance of material. Formal review time in a session can incorporate many of the training methods suggested in this section to review the material in order to facilitate comprehension and retention of the material.

**23. Role playing**

Situations that typify real-world experiences are presented. Learners act out their assigned roles, applying realistic behavior to the contrived situations. Variations: multiple role plays throughout the room, asking players to reverse roles, let more than one learner play any given character, scripted role playing.

**24. Skill teaching**

Formal procedures are employed to explain and demonstrate a new skill, allowing adequate time for the learners to practice the technique with ongoing coaching and feedback.

**25. Skits**

Skits serve about the same purposes as the structured role play—they are just more rehearsed. Audio and video vignettes can also deliver the message. They are predictable and precise and allow the presenter to cover material fairly fast, but they are less fun than role plays or skits because participants are less involved.

**26. Storytelling**

Learners share concrete experiences related to the training topic. These stories help provide a personal connection to the material and help learners clarify their interest, values, opinions, and stake in the topic. Listeners have the opportunity to reflect on a diverse wealth of experiences.

**27. Write to learn**

Learners are given a provocative theme/question/problem/task and asked to write down their thoughts before the group deals with the topic verbally. This technique helps people gain access to their thinking processes so they can more confidently and clearly proceed to the next stage of learning.

# DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ADULTS

## Organizing the Environment:

Group Learning Environment—Adults learn best when the learning environment is comfortable and safe. It is important that participants meet in a location that is accessible and conducive to the goals of the program. For example, the room should be large enough to accommodate the group, ensure privacy, be comfortable, and equipped with audiovisual (if necessary) and other materials necessary to carry out each session. Participants should sit in an informal arrangement, where they can easily see and speak to each other.

During the sessions, the facilitator(s) guides the group through a variety of activities. He or she is responsible for preparing for the meeting, structuring the lessons, developing group cohesiveness, pointing out common themes, redirecting discussion when necessary, resolving conflict, and assigning at-home activities.

The best facilitators typically arrive early to complete final preparations for their sessions and greet the participants by name as they arrive. Taking care of last minute details helps facilitators feel more confident and frees their mental energies to focus on what is important—the audience—once the session begins. Before the session opening, good facilitators are sure to attend to three areas: (1) the comfort and perspective of the audience, (2) the utility of the learning environment, and (3) the workspace for the session. The following is a compilation of some helpful hints to get ready before a workshop session.

# SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

Decide which seating arrangement best fits the room and the learning objectives (Smith 1984) (See diagram).

*Theater style* offers the greatest number of seats in the smallest space but lacks face-to-face contact and makes interaction difficult. Consider for groups over 50.

*Classroom style* adds tables and decreases space. It promotes presenter-audience discussion but inhibits group discussion. It is conducive to note taking. Consider this arrangement for groups of 30 to 50.

An alternative to style for groups of 30-150 participants is the *herringbone design*. For this design, tables angled so participants seated on both sides have their shoulders pointing toward the speaker. This allows for lecture style learning and small-group discussions between people at the same or different tables.

In *u-shaped* seating for groups of 15 to 30, participants can easily see each other, which promotes group dynamics. The source of authority is focused in the open end of the U.

*Circled chairs* or *tables* is the most informal seating. It allows face-to-face contact for all the participants and the presenter. It also places the presenter and learners at the same level of importance. It works best in groups up to 16.

- Warm up the learning environment by using props to create a visual focus and an aesthetically pleasant stage environment. Facilitators' props may include the platform, easels, posters, screens, stools, and chairs. Arrange them to define (and put boundaries on) the presentation area. Use colorful graphics that welcome people, present the name of the session, and display a public agenda.
- Decide what the facilitator's position should be in the room to give the majority of the audience the best visual access. The facilitator should plan to be there and stand still (so that the participants can get a good look) for the first few minutes.
- Test the overhead projector and other equipment. The two most common problems are poor focus and burnt-out bulbs. Be sure to have a spare bulb, or, better yet, a spare projector.
- Check the sound system, if there is one.

- Organize materials where they are easily assessable and in the order that they are needed.

## **Prepare the Workspace**

The final step in preparing for the session is establishing logistical routines so that during the presenter's mental space can be reserved for monitoring the audience's interaction with the content. Here are some examples:

- Make final notes on a private agenda. Prior to the workshop, it is important to plan for the appropriate pacing of all planned activities and breaks within the training session. Mark times in the margin to help monitor and adjust the presentation.
- Stick strips of masking tape on the easel along the side of the flipchart for quick paper hanging during the session.
- Designate a space for pens, spare tape, blank overheads, and so on. Always return items there. This is particularly important if there is more than one presenter.
- If transparencies are being used, arrange them in the sequence. Make transparencies bold, colorful, and simple. Use very large print for transparencies so all participants can follow the text.
- Place handouts in stacks organized by the sequence in which they will be distributed.
- Remove clutter from the entire workspace. Remove briefcases, extra handouts, everything that is unnecessary. Eliminate visual distraction for the audience and mental distraction for the facilitator.
- Finally, place the facilitator's private agenda at fingertip reach so that it can be referred to unobtrusively at any time to keep the session on course.



# TEN TIME SAVERS FOR ACTIVE LEARNING

Active learning takes time. Therefore, it is crucial that no time is wasted. Many presenters however, lose time by allowing a number of time wasters to occur. Below are time saving techniques that help keep the session on schedule.

1. ***Start on Time:*** This act sends a message that there is a schedule. If all the participants are not yet in the room, a facilitator may choose to begin the workshop with a discussion or filler activity.
2. ***Give Clear Instructions.*** If the directions are involved or complicated put them in writing. Otherwise, break them down into manageable pieces.
3. ***Prepare Visual Information Ahead Of Time.*** Write the main points on a flip chart or blackboard before the session starts. Use “headlines” to capture what participants are saying or select a recorder.
4. ***Distribute Handouts Quickly:*** A facilitator will need to establish when it is the right time to distribute handouts. In some situations it is best to wait until the workshop is complete before distributing handouts. Other times, it may be best to distribute handouts when they match pertinent topics being discussed. In any event, handouts may be quickly disseminated in prepared stapled packets and distributed in packets to key areas of the room so that several people can help.
5. ***Expedite Small-Group Reporting:*** Ask subgroups to list their ideas on flip chart paper and post their lists on the walls of the room so that all groups’ work can be viewed and discussed at the same time. Or, going from group to group, have each one report only one item at a time so that everyone can listen for possible overlap. Subgroups should not repeat what has already been said.
6. ***Don’t Let Discussions Drag On:*** Express the need to move on, but during a subsequent discussion, be sure to call on those who were cut off. Or begin a discussion by stating a time limit and suggesting how many contributions time will permit.
7. ***Swiftly Obtain Volunteers:*** Don’t wait endlessly for volunteers to emerge. Recruit volunteers before the session starts or restarts after a break; or call on individuals when there are no immediate volunteers.
8. ***Be Prepared For Tired And Lethargic Groups*** Provide a list of ideas, questions, or even answers, and ask participants to select ones they agree with. Frequently, the list will trigger thoughts and issues from others.



9. ***Quicken The Pace Of Activities From Time To Time:*** Often, putting participants under time pressure energizes them and makes them more productive.
10. ***Get The Group's Prompt Attention:*** Use a variety of cues or attention-getting devices to remind the group to reconvene after small-group activity.

# THE ROLE OF FACILITATOR

The role of facilitator is that of a guide, not an “expert.” The facilitator promotes involvement and dialogue, stimulate questions, and encourage participation in the learning activities. Facilitators have the right to state their opinions, but it is usually best to do so after others have given their opinions.

The job as leader is to assess the needs of the group, to plan appropriate experiences using program materials, and to keep the group productive and on task.

Have the courage to be imperfect as a leader of the group. There is no perfect leader. Relax and enjoy this experience.

## Facilitating Group Discussions, Guidelines and Techniques

- Paraphrase the words of participants so that they feel understood and the others hear a concise summary of what’s been said at greater length:

*So, what you’re saying is that you have to be very careful about the words you use with your children.*

- Check the meaning of the words of a participant or ask a participant to clarify what he or she is saying:

*Are you saying that you are supporting your children’s social development? I’m not sure that I understand exactly what you meant. Could you please explain it to us again?*

- Compliment an interesting or insightful comment:

*That’s a good point. I’m glad that you brought that to our attention.*

- Elaborate on a participant’s contribution to the discussion with examples, or suggest a new way to view the problem:

*Your comments provide an interesting point from the minority perspective. We could also consider how the majority would view the same situation.*

- Energize a discussion by quickening the pace, using humor, or if necessary, prodding the group for more contributions.

*Oh my, we have lots of quiet people! Here's a challenge for you. For the next two minutes, let's see how many ways that we can promote active learning.*

- Disagree (gently) with a participant's comments to stimulate further discussion.

*I can see where you are coming from, but I'm not sure that what you are describing is always the case. Has anyone else had an experience that is different than Ana's?*

- Mediate differences of opinion between participants, and relieve any tensions that may be brewing.

*I think that Saba and Sara are not really disagreeing with each other but are just bringing out two different sides of this issue.*

- Pull together ideas, showing their relationship to each other.

*As you can see from these comments, the words we use can offend people. Both of them have given us an example of how they feel excluded.*

- Change the group process by altering the method for obtaining participation or moving the group to a stage of evaluating ideas that have been placed before the group.

*Let's break into smaller groups and see if you can come up with some criteria for establishing gender-sensitive word usage.*

- Summarize (and record, if desired) the major views of the group.

*I have noted three major ideas that have come from the group's discussion about building a bond with your children: (1) Playing with your children helps to build a bond. (2) Talking to and with your children builds a bond. (3) Attending to your children's needs helps to build a bond.*

# A FOUNDATION FOR BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The qualities of the facilitator that build the foundation for an effective relationship with parent participants are (1) respect, (2) a nonjudgmental attitude, and (3) empathy (Beckman, Frank, and Newcomb, 1996).

## ***Respect***

Facilitators must show respect for the participants by listening carefully to their comments and inquiries, using direct eye contact, responding without judgement (see following section), and offering support. Participants may initially be reticent to discuss their feelings. However, a facilitator willing to acknowledge the participants' feelings becomes a welcome source of support to them.

## ***Nonjudgmental Attitude***

A nonjudgmental attitude requires thinking positively and openly about participants regardless of their personal opinions. When facilitators remain nonjudgmental, they encourage participants to value their own decisions without feeling pressured to adopt the facilitator's opinions. A participant may become alienated, if a facilitator disapproves of her beliefs.

## ***Empathy***

The ability to be sensitive to the participant's situation and communicate understanding demonstrates empathy. Facilitators can determine whether they are effectively demonstrating empathy by observing the way a participant responds to them. Those participants that seem comfortable sharing personal matters with facilitators may be feeling the facilitators' empathetic communication. Participants who are less open in sharing their concerns may be less willing or able at a particular time to be feeling the empathetic efforts of the facilitator. However, it is important to be sensitive to needs of individuals who are not comfortable sharing personal experiences and information. The worst thing a facilitator can do is to pressure an individual who is not ready to share.

## **Communication Skills**

Once facilitators understand the qualities necessary to develop effective relationships with participants, they can begin to further develop their communication skills by using the following techniques:

- *Employ active listening.* The facilitator listens to participants, respects their views, and offers support. In this way, the facilitator gains a better understanding of how they view themselves, their learning and their

circumstances. Be aware of body language when listening to participants—use direct eye contact and face them. Allow them to finish their thoughts without cutting them off.

- *Ask questions.* The facilitator should ask questions to elicit information, expand the conversation, and clarify the information. Using a balance or both open-ended and close-ended questions allows the facilitator to obtain different types of information. Open-ended questions promote free-flowing discussion. For example, “What is challenging for you about this lesson?” Or “What types of activities do you enjoy using as a teacher?” are questions that invite an expansive discussion. Close-ended questions elicit brief answers: “What time does school end?” or “Do you tell stories to your children?” The facilitator should note the respondent’s style of interaction and the pacing of answers. By adjusting questions to the learner’s style, the presenter conveys a respectful attitude toward them.
- *Reflect and clarify.* The facilitator should make comments that lets the learners know they have been heard and understood. The facilitator can restate the situation and clarify the points of information.
- *Reframe.* If a participant is having difficulty understanding, the facilitator should ask the learner to look at the information in a new way and explore different ways of problem solving. If a learner has difficulty mastering a given assignment, the facilitator may offer a new way of presenting the material.

## The Challenging Participant

Using active learning techniques tends to minimize problems that often plague facilitators who rely too heavily on lecture and full-group discussion. If difficulties such as monopolizing, distracting, and withdrawing behaviors occur, the interventions listed below can be very helpful. Facilitators may use the specific suggestions given below when working with a difficult participant or the entire group.

### *Ten Interventions when Participants Get Out of Hand:*

***Signal Nonverbally:*** Make eye contact with participants or move closer to them when they hold private conversations, start to fall asleep, or hide from participation.

***Listen Actively:*** When a participant monopolizes discussion, goes off target, or argues, interject with a summary of their views and then ask others to speak. Or acknowledge the value of their viewpoints or invite them to discuss their views during a break.

***Solicit Broad Participation*** When the same participants always speak in the group while others hold back, pose a question or problem and then ask how many people have a response to it. New hands should go up. Call on one of them. The same technique might work when trying to obtain volunteers for role playing.

***Invoke Participation Rules:*** From time to time, tell participants that you would like to use rules such as these:

- Only those who have not spoken as yet can participate.
- Build on each other's ideas.
- Speak for yourself, not for others.
- Avoid criticism

***Use Good-Natured Humor*** One-Way to deflect difficult behavior is to use humor. Be careful to not be sarcastic or patronizing. Gently protest the harassment (e.g., "Enough, enough for one day!"). Humorously, put yourself down instead of the parents (e.g., "I guess I deserved this.")

***Connect on a Personal Level*** Whether the problem participants are hostile or withdrawn; make a point of getting to know them during breaks. It's unlikely that they will continue to be problematic or remain distant once the facilitator has taken an interest in them.

***Change The Method Of Participation:*** Sometimes new formats such as using pairs or small groups rather than full-group activities can change the tone of the learning session. Shy participants are more apt to participate if the "think-pair-share" method is used. This works well when participants think about a question or topic, pair up and discuss their ideas, and then share their collective thoughts in small or large groups.

***Ignore Mildly Negative Behaviors:*** Pay little or no attention to behaviors that are small nuisances. Carry on and see if they go away.

***Discuss Very Negative Behaviors in Private:*** The facilitator must call a stop to behaviors that are detrimental to learning. Request, in private, a change in behavior of those participants who are disruptive. If the entire group is involved, stop the discussion and explain clearly what is necessary from participants to conduct the workshop effectively.

***Don't Take Challenges Personally:*** Remember that many negative behaviors have nothing to do with the facilitator. Try to make some changes to the workshop schedule to increase the positive involvement of all participants.

## Setting a Cooperative and Comfortable Tone

To set a co-operative tone, the meeting may include an “icebreaker”, which helps to warm up participants by introducing them to one another and engage them in activities. Some examples are provided below.

***Personal Momento*** Ask participants to find something in their purse, wallet or bag that they consider uniquely and typically theirs. Share this with the group.

***Reverse Introductions***: Ask participants to find a partner (preferably someone they do not know). Find out at least three things about the other person. In round robin fashion, each introduces the other to the whole group and shares information.

***Personal Name Tag***: Follow the directions in Reverse Introductions. Provide name tag materials (paper, glue, scissors, ribbon, and other collage type materials). Each person makes a name tag for his/her partner, which somehow represents the person e.g. a frog face for someone who collects frogs. Each person introduces his/her partner.

***Spin a Yarn***: Cut yarn or string in lengths. Participants select a piece of yarn. People take turns walking their thumbs and forefingers up or down the yarn telling their names and something about themselves until the end of the yarn is reached.

***Moments in Life***: Before training, ask people to write and submit a little known fact of something funny, interesting or surprising about themselves that they don't mind sharing. It could be an experience, trip, or special accomplishment. The trainer compiles these into “Moments of Life” sheets to start the next meeting. Participants match people and events.

***Interesting Name***: Ask each participant to tell something interesting, funny, strange about his/her name to help others remember that name. Divide a large group it into circles of 5 or 6.

***To Tell the Truth***: (For groups who have been together for a time). Taking turns, each person makes 4 statements about themselves, 3 statements are true and 1 is false. Participants write down what they think is a false statement. After all statements are made, participants will state their guesses. There are often real surprises.

***Ring Match/5 Things Different:*** Ask participants to find a partner with the same number of rings. They are to look at each other over then turn back to back. Each person changes 5 things on them. Turn around and partners try and guess what has been changed.

***Today I Feel Like...*** In the meeting room, ask participants to find any object, thing, etc. that reminds them of how they feel at the moment, ask them to state the object and why they chose it.

***If I were a tee shirt...*** Ask participants to complete the statement, "If I were a tee shirt, I'd say..."